

Folk Songs of the American Fighter Pilot

In

Southeast Asia, 1967-1968

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FOREWORD

Students of the military folksong are almost without exception not folklorists but, rather, military men or military history enthusiasts.¹ In this regard Professor Tusso's collection is like that of most previous compilations of Service Songs. What makes his manuscript unique is that it deals with the songs sung by the men of the American Air Force during the Vietnam War. Only two previous works have been devoted exclusively to the U.S. Air Force song tradition.² Even this small number, however, is sufficient to show there is a "creative" folksong tradition within this particular branch of American military forces. The creativity is in the verses and not the tunes, for, if the existing collections are representative, members of the Air Force are, and have always been, particularly addicted to parodying folk and popular melodies. William Wallrich in his 1953 article, "U.S. Air Force Parodies: World War II and Korean War," claims to have a collection of 400 Air Force parodies and cites verses which utilize the tune of such folksongs as "Casey Jones" (Laws G1), and "Down In The Valley," and such popular numbers as the 1868 hit "The Daring Young Man On The Flying Trapeze," which has become a standard in the popular song field, and the widely known "Rambling Wreck From Georgia Tech." Hillbilly classics like "The Wabash Cannonball" and "The Wreck Of The Old 97," also provided melodies for some of the World War II and Korean War parodies. Professor Tusso's collection indicates that at least one of these tunes, "The Wabash Cannonball," is popular among today's Air Force in Vietnam since it is the tune used for three of the thirty-three songs presented.

Only two traditional ballads -- "Sweet Betsy From Pike," (Laws B9) known here as "Wild Weasel" and "Strawberry Roan" (Laws B18) which appears as "In-Flight Refueling" -- provide the prototune for the items in the present collection. Some traditional lyric pieces, notably "On Top Of Old Smokey" which is used for "Old Smokey" and "On Top Of The Pop Up," also claim this distinction. Nineteenth century pop music contributes "Jingle Bells," transformed here into "Dashing Through The Sky," and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" which appears as "One Hundred Missions." More commonly, though, the borrowed tunes are taken from popular numbers of the last thirty years. "Ghost Riders In The Sky," the Vaughn Monroe hit of the late 1940's, appears as both "Ballad Of C-130" and "Song Of The Wolf Pack." Other tunes taken from that era include the 1945 Andrews Sisters' "Along The Navajo Trail," presented here as "The Ho-Chi-Minh Trail," the 1948 Peggy Lee hit "Mañana," changed here to the satirical "Our Leaders," and the 1946 Pete Seeger-Lee Hays anti-war effort "Where Have All The Flowers Gone," transformed to "Where Have All The Old Heads Gone" and probably owing its popularity with airmen in Vietnam to the 1960's recording by Peter, Paul and Mary.

The most recent tunes borrowed by the Air Force folksong "composers" are Petula Clark's 1960's hit "Downtown," which is set to verses describing the plight of men sent on a bombing mission to Hanoi; Barry Sadler's 1966 "Ballad Of The Green Berets," figuring here as "Ballad Of The PIO" recounting the troubles of the Public Information Officer; and "I've Been Everywhere," a popular song recorded by several pop and country and western artists in the 1960's and, as given here, a listing of the various villages an airman may have bombed during his Vietnamese tour of duty. In other words, Tusso's collection, like the earlier one by Wallrich, reveals that the Air Force folksong "composer" does not create his own tunes

but instead relies heavily on popular and folk songs and, generally, those of recent vintage. The oldest tune in the present collection, "Sweet Betsy From Pike," can be traced back over a century to an English source. Most of the melodies, however, are much more recent. "Strawberry Roan," for example, goes back only to the 1920's and the majority of borrowed tunes aren't even that elderly. Perhaps the high degree of parody in Air Force folksongs partially explains why relatively new tunes are utilized. Modern songs are more likely to be imitated than ancient ones simply because the contemporary items are often more widely known.

This discussion of tune borrowing would be incomplete if some mention were not made of lack of musical transcription for this collection. Bertrand Bronson argues that studies of songs should include consideration of music as well as texts. Undoubtedly this is the ideal but one which has not been met by Professor Tusso. However, as he notes in his introduction he is no folklorist and can hardly be criticized for failing to do what most trained folklorists have not done -- present texts and music when publishing their collections. Indeed he can be lauded for even bothering to compile the most extensive work to date on the U.S. Air Force song tradition -- an area completely ignored by trained collectors, most of whom are still busily searching for the "classics" of folksong. Folklore is, or should be, present oriented as well as past oriented. Most folksong specialists, however, are still looking backward for Child and Child-like items of great age at the same time overlooking the less durable traditional songs found among such folk groups as the Air Force fighter pilots. Such occupational songs are created, thrive, and die within a short time span because they are of an esoteric nature and designed to appeal to the highly fluid "community." Once this group is dispersed then the songs die. These elements are probably the distinctive features in occupational song. In any event the present collection indicates an area of tradition which should be explored and charted by the professional folklorist.

FOOTNOTES

¹The most extensive collection and the standard reference work in this field is Edward Dolph's Sound Off (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1942). The only works by anyone with a folklore background of any kind are the two collections published in the late 1920's by the folksong popularizer John Jacob Niles. Singing Soldiers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927) and Songs My Mother Never Taught Me (New York: Gold Label Books, Inc., 1929).

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Both of these appeared in Western Folklore and were compiled by William Wallrich, "U.S. Air Force Parodies: World War II and Korean War," Western Folklore 12:4 (1953), 270-282; and "U.S. Air Force Parodies Based upon 'The Dying Hobo,'" Western Folklore 13:4 (1954), 236-244.

INTRODUCTION

The songs in this collection were written and sung by American fighter pilots in Vietnam and Thailand during 1967 and 1968. I first became interested in this particular folk medium while I was stationed at Ubon, Thailand, flying F4D Phantoms from May 1968 to May 1969. I have edited some of these songs from tapes made third and fourth hand, from broad-sheets, and others from wing and squadron songbooks. Except for one of the songs, the authors are unknown and the material up to this time has been in the public domain.

This collection, of course, represents only a fraction of the perhaps hundreds of folksongs composed at the many fighter bases in Vietnam and Thailand. At many bases songs were doubtless composed and sung in the confines of a lonely room in the early morning hours after a mission -- such songs were not meant for the public, and except for rare instances will probably never be seen or sung again. But at some bases, such as Udorn, Korat, and Ubon in Thailand, and Phu Cat and Cam Ranh Bay in South Vietnam, folksongs locally composed and sung were central to the pilots' social life, and they have been copied and taped over and over again. In this latter case, each base or squadron often had its own folk-composer, men like Dave Wilson ("Never Fly in the Ashau on Sunday") and Tony McPeak ("VC Blues") who flew F-100's at Phu Cat in South Vietnam, or Jeff Wilkins, the minstrel of our own 435th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Ubon.

Jeff was from the South, in his early twenties, and a bachelor. Southern folk ballads flowed through his veins, and many a night I heard him working on arrangements through the paper-thin walls of our adjoining rooms. We had both arrived at Ubon at the same time, and I was able to observe Jeff's musical life move through several phases. At first he busied himself by listening to tapes of country performers. Next he plunked around and played American folk music on a guitar he brought with him from the States. Gradually home faded in his memory and the war, Thailand, and his flying comrades began to occupy almost all of his waking thoughts. Jeff turned to practicing some of the songs in this collection, and then performed them at squadron parties. Eventually he bought a Japanese twelve-string guitar and began composing fighter pilot songs of his own.

Jeff would start with a feeling, a mood, or a theme, and a melody from the past would seem to fit. He'd play and sing, composing orally, and would either write out the lyrics when he finished, or another pilot would jot them down as Jeff composed. One night Em Roberts and I helped him write a song in this manner, but it was mainly Jeff's. He flew almost all his missions at night -- the most dangerous kind of flying -- but as he wrote in one of his songs, "a man must have lust for the lure of the night."

Implicit in what I've said so far is the concept that a certain atmosphere, a certain kind of person, and sufficient leisure time were necessary for such songs to have been written. Dave Carson and Tony Dater, who were stationed at Danang in F4's while I was at Ubon, tell me that little or no original folk composition went on there. For the fighter pilot, Danang was considered an extremely grim base. Rocket attack

was common, and when it was not actually happening it was almost always feared. A man tended to avoid crowded rooms -- he liked to know where the nearest shelter was.

Things were quite different at other bases, and these bases seemed to produce more songs. At Ubon, for example, we lived a life very similar to that of the comitatus, or band of Anglo-Saxon warriors in the Old English heroic poem, Beowulf. The center of our social life was our great hall, or officers' club. We ate all our meals there in an all-male, war-oriented, closed social group. Through our sub-chiefs, or flight commanders, we warriors were bound in loyalty to our tribe, or squadron, which was physically embodied in our lord, or squadron commander. His word was law -- he punished misdeeds and dispensed not rings of gold, but Silver Stars and Distinguished Flying Crosses for deeds of valor.

Once each day we would mount our valiant craft, which might be named "The Gunner" or, oddly enough, "Thor's Hammer," and go on a mission. After the mission we would invariably go to the great hall, join our comrades, and drink amid boasts of our exploits.

Our hope of immortality was the promise that we could return home after completing 100 missions over North Vietnam, and after the bombing halt of November 1968, upon completion of a calendar year of service. We were proud warriors -- we rarely talked or thought of death -- at least in public. No one ever criticized another's prowess except in jest, and our sub-chiefs and lord were the bravest, the most accomplished in battle, of us all. Both this dream of immortality and pride co-existed, however, under the looming presence of wyrd, or fate, for the "Golden Bee-Bee," that one artillery round or solitary missile destined from the beginning of time to shatter us from the sky, might be waiting for us on tomorrow's mission. In many ways it was not only an Anglo-Saxon but very Hemingwayesque way of life.

And although many of our comrades did die in battle, it was almost always, in the mind's eye, a rather antiseptic death -- a dramatic fireball on a beautifully pastoral hillside, or sometimes a simple failure to return. Side by side with death existed another kind of immortality -- almost every day new warriors arrived and old warriors left. Our number was always constant.

Every month my squadron, the Eagles, had a formal party. We lived in our battle garb, our drab green-grey flying suits, but once each month we put on very special, highly ornamented bright blue flying suits, our highly polished black boots and crimson scarves, and gathered in the great hall at 8:00 p.m. For an hour or so we would stand and talk in small groups. Now and then I would catch a glimpse of our lord, chatting nobly with those around him. There was an aspect of great respect and deference in the faces of his audience, faces flushed with youth and the fellowship and joy of life that filled the room. The drink was more a ritual than anything else -- great amounts of it were consumed, but I rarely saw any one drunk. The purpose of the feast was to promote fellowship and perpetuate the rebirth cycle by welcoming the newcomers and paying tribute to those who were leaving.

About 9:00 the feast was served by Thai maidens in native dress. The tables were sumptuously set. The lord and his staff sat at a table per-

haps twenty feet long, with the lord at the center. At four tables aligned perpendicularly to the lord's table sat the warriors of the four flights, with those of highest rank sitting nearest the lord's table, and those of lower sitting furthest away.

Expensive, choice wine was poured and re-poured as we toasted the President, the King of Thailand, the Air Force Chief of Staff, the Wing Commander, and our own lord, the squadron commander. As we ate, occasionally a warrior would rise and jokingly toast another. The laughter and good spirits would resound. During the meal a solitary singer or a group of singers would provide entertainment. On some occasions broadsheets were provided and we would all sing. Sometimes we sang ballads, sometimes we sang humorous songs that poked jests at the foibles of our fellows. The songs were often followed by a humorous dramatic sketch or comedy routine.

After the feast we would sit and sip after-dinner drinks or smoke rich cigars while the new warriors were introduced by the operations officer. Each would say a few words as we sized him up -- these were the untried men with whom we would soon be flying, fighting, and perhaps dying. Then those that were leaving would in turn mount the rostrum. Their talks were usually ten to fifteen minutes long, and thoughtfully, carefully prepared. After all, a man had a year to prepare this talk. Each wanted to sum up an indescribable year, to leave something of himself behind for his comrades before he was swept away to Valhalla by the Valkyrie-like C-130 transport which would leave the next morning, carrying only those who had the proper credentials. Finally the lord himself would speak, the wisdom of many battles behind him. He would welcome and encourage the newcomers and pay tribute to those who had successfully run the course. With this the feast was over, but perhaps half the company would linger another hour or two, talking, drinking, and singing. On one occasion the great lord himself, the wing commander, stayed long after the feast and we sang songs of our war and of his.

I hope that what I have said will serve to help you understand the social context, the spirit in which these songs were composed and written. Fellowship -- love -- hate -- joy -- despair -- even loneliness -- these are all found in the songs in this collection. I do not delude myself that they are great songs, but they are truthful songs, they are genuine folk expression, and they deserve to be preserved. I am sorry that I am not a trained folklorist and also that I did not ascertain sources more carefully while I was in Southeast Asia. I was quite busy at the time and collected as many songs as I could, never planning to do anything rather than replay them for personal pleasure.

One problem for the reader is the peculiar jargon and technically specialized vocabulary of the American fighter pilot. To help the reader I have included a Glossary wherein I list and explain every term or phrase which I thought he might have trouble understanding. For help in preparing the Glossary I would like to thank Dave Carson, Tony Dater, and John Pratt, currently professors in the English Department at the United States Air Force Academy, and all of whom flew combat in Southeast Asia. For songbooks, tapes, and other information I am indebted to Hank Fordham, John Carroll, and John Grathwol. I also owe a good deal to Colonel Jess Gatlin, head of the Air Force Academy Department of English, who encouraged me in this project and provided much of the time for its completion. Most of all I must thank the American fighter pilot -- be he home with his loved ones, dead, or imprisoned -- for both inspiring and writing the songs in this collection.

THE SONGS

Songs with titles marked with an asterisk (*) are found on a tape deposited in the Archives of the Folklore Institute, Indiana University. The singers are unknown except for those songs which I sing myself. Songs with commonly known melodies are not, as a rule, to be found on the tape.

1. Ballad of the C-130

(Melody: Ghost Riders in the Sky)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)

Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

A trash hauler flew overhead one dark and windy day,
He passed above our runway as he flew upon his way,
When all at once our flight of four gave him an awful fright,
We flew within a hundred feet and pitched out on his right.

CHORUS: Yippee aye aay, yippee aye o-oh,
Trash haulers in the sky.

We called out on the radio, he hit a power dive,
And prayed to God and Orville Wright that he'd remain alive,
He cut down through our pattern, and pulled about two G's,
When he regained control again he barely cleared the trees!

We told him on the radio, we said to him, "My son,"
We said, "My boy if you want to live you'd damn well better run,
So push those frappin' throttles up and head across the sky,
And never venture near again where fighter pilots fly!"

2. Ballad of the MIG-21 Pilot*

Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham. Henry C. Fordham was born on January 29, 1928 and retired from the Air Force in March, 1970. Hank was a college graduate whose musical interests included country and western. He allowed me to copy a tape containing a number of the songs in my collection. He did not sing or compose himself, nor do I know where he got the tapes originally. He could be contact by interested people through the Retired Officer Locator, USAFMPC, Randolph AFB, Texas.

Seventh fragged us way up North
On a bridge that wasn't worth
Hanging out your ass to be shot at,
But they said, "You've gotta go,
Put the word on Uncle Ho,
You've no choice, men, this is combat!"

So the boys in TOC pooped us up on what we'd see,
 And Intelligence said, "Watch for SAM's;
 MIG's are up, and triple-A
 Will be thick as flies today,
 Give 'em hell, the war is in your hands."

Well, we hit the tanker twice,
 Then my blood ran cold as ice
 When we dropped off and crossed the Red,
 Barracuda understood,
 He called out, "That launch is good,
 Take it down right now or you'll be dead!"

Well, it almost makes me cry,
 Down below I see bullseye,
 Through the cloud of flak between the SAM's,
 There's the bridge I came to bomb,
 Lord, I'm scared, I want my mom!
 Then my GIB said, "Pickle, pull, both hands!"

Yes, it's almost just like heaven,
 Twenty miles from 97,
 We're home free, of that there is no doubt,
 Then a MIG made one more pass,
 Hosed a missile up my ass,
 Then the bird pitched up and we punched out.

I could see the Phantoms go,
 Round and round from there below,
 They won't leave without my GIB and me,
 And that MIG-21
 Just got plastered with a gun,
 And its pilot's frightened eyes I see.

Oh, he landed in a tree,
 Only forty feet from me,
 And I whipped out my .38,
 I said, "Tell me how it feels,
 When your MIG turns two cartwheels,
 Come on down with us and here we'll wait."

"Hellow, Chevy Lead up there,
 This is Chevy Two down here,
 With my GIB and the guy you just shot down,"
 "Chevy Two, say what you mean,
 I've called in the Jolly Green,
 Just stay put and soon we'll have you found."

First I saw the Sandy come,
 Making circles in the sun,
 Then the Jolly Greens were overhead,
 The MIG jock went up first,
 I made him believe the worst,
 "No tricks, boys, or I'll fill you with lead!"

Well, we brought that sonova gun,
 All the way to 51,
 Two took off, it's true, but three came back;
 He won't fly the Phantom Two,
 But here's what we're gonna do,
 Make him HOUSEBOY for the WHOLE WOLFPACK!

3. Ballad of the PIO
 (Melody: Ballad of the Green Berets)
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

There he goes, the PIO,
 Last to know, the first to go;
 100 times he flies the Huey's,
 Flown by publicity-seeking luey's.

Out to battle he must go,
 Sent by those in the know;
 He may take a sniper's round,
 And be left upon the ground.

Fighting men may pass him by,
 And when they ask, "Who was that guy?"
 "I dunno, it's hard to say.
 What the hell, just let him lay."

And when he gets to the golden gate,
 St. Peter says, "You've goofed up, mate!
 So go to Hell in all your glory;
 When you get back you can do your story!"

4. Banana Valley*
 Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham. See song number 2.

Just go on down, to Banana Valley,
 Go on down and meet your fate,
 Just go on down to Banana Valley,
 When you go down, down, down, you'd better learn to hate.

Well, I got friends in Banana Valley,
 I got friends that learned too late,
 I got friends in Banana Valley,
 They went down, down, down, 'cuz they did not hate.

There's snakes in the weeds in Banana Valley,
 Them snakes in the weeds know how to hate,
 Them snakes in the weeds in Banana Valley,
 They go down, down, down, and there they wait.

Well, I heard all 'bout Banana Valley,
 How fightin' them snakes could be so great,
 It's so much fun in Banana Valley,
 Gotta go down, down, down, and investigate.

Well, two weeks ago in Banana Valley,
 Two of my friends killed a lotta them snakes,
 Two weeks ago in Banana Valley,
 They went down, down, down, to attend the wake.

So go on down to Banana Valley,
 Go on down and meet your fate,
 Just go on down to Banana Valley,
 But when you go down, down, down, you'd better learn to hate.
 Doodle-doo-doodle-doo.

5. Dashing Through the Sky

(Melody: Jingle Bells)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Dashing through the sky,
 In a foxtrot 105
 Through the flak we fly,
 Trying to stay alive;
 The SAM's destroy our calm,
 The MIG's come up to play,
 What fun it is to strafe and bomb
 The D.R.V. today.

CHORUS: CBU's, Mark 82's, 750's, too,
 Daddy Vulcan strikes again
 Our Christmas gift to you!

Heads up, Ho-Chi-Minh,
 The 5's are on their way,
 Your luck it has give in,
 There's gonna be hell to pay;
 Today it is our turn,
 To make you gawk and stare;
 What fun it is to watch things burn
 And blow up everywhere!!!

6. Downtown [Hanoi]*

Armed Forces Radio Network Broadcast, Ubon, Thailand, August, 1968;
8th Tactical Fighter Wing Broadsheets, Ubon, Thailand, May, 1968-May, 1969;
Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham. See song number 2

When you get up at 2 o'clock in the morning
You can bet you'll go -- downtown,
Shaking in your boots, you're sweating heavy all over,
'Cuz you've got to go -- downtown.

Smoke a pack of cigarettes before the briefing's over,
Wishing you weren't bombing, wishing you were flying cover,
It's safer that way -- the flak is much thicker there --
You know you're biting your nails and you're pulling your hair,
You're going downtown, where all the lights are bright,
Downtown, you'd rather switch than fight,
Downtown, hope you come home tonight,
Downtown, downtown.

Planning the route you keep hoping that you
Won't have to go today -- downtown,
Checking the weather and it's scattered to broken,
So you still don't know -- downtown.

Waiting for the guys in TOC to say you're cancelled,
Hoping that the words they give will be what suits your fancy,
Don't make me go -- I'd much rather RTB --
So you sit and you wait thinking oh, what a fate,
You're going downtown, but you don't wanna go,
Downtown, that's why you're feeling low,
Downtown, going to see Uncle Ho,
Downtown, downtown.

MISSILE FORCE, TURN NOW....
BARRACUDA HAS SWEEPING GUNS....
DISREGARD THE LAUNCH LIGHT ---- NO THREAT ----

What do you mean, no threat?
There's a pair at 2 o'clock!
Take it down!
Downtown.

7. Give Me Operations*

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Don't give me an old Phantom II,
That sports not one pilot, but two;
The guy in the back could just stay in the sack,
Don't give me an old Phantom II.

CHORUS: Just give me operations
Way out on some lonely atoll,
For I'm too young to die,
I just want to grow old.

Don't frag me for old Tiger Hound,
Bad weather, high mountains abound;
They don't give you credit, so screw it, forget it,
Don't frag me for old Tiger Hound.

And don't frag me for old Package 6,
I'll be in one hell of a fix;
The MIG's all come on when my radar is gone,
Don't frag me for old Package 6.

And don't frag me for Silver Dawn West,
Your butt doesn't get any rest;
You think it won't last, your poor aching ass,
Don't frag me for Silver Dawn West.

And don't frag me for Silver Dawn East,
I hear it's one hell of a beast;
Both crew members reek, and you can't take a leak,
Don't frag me for Silver Dawn East.

Well, I'll take back that old Phantom II,
That sports not one pilot, but two;
The guy in the front seat might just sit on his rump,
I'll take back an old Phantom II.

8. Hello, Cam Ranh Tower

(Melody: The Wabash Cannonball)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

"Hello, Cam Ranh Tower, this is Hammer 41;
My BLC light's glowing, I've just lost PC-1,
The engine's running roughly, the EGT is high,
Please clear me for a straight-in, this bird's about to die!"

"Hammer 41, this is Cam Ranh Tower here;
We'd like to let you in right now, but a senator is near;
He's here to please constituents, his plane is close at hand,
So please divert to Tuy Hoa, we can't clear you to land."

"Hello, Cam Ranh Tower, this is Hammer 41;
I'm turning into final, hydraulic pressure's gone,
The generator's off the line, the RPM just fell,
Please send the senator around and tell him 'War is hell.'"

"Hammer 41, this is Cam Ranh Tower again;
You'll have to keep on circling, regardless of your plan;
I'm sorry 'bout your problem, but you will have to yield,
We must give the priority to Senator M_____."

"Now LISTEN, Cam Ranh Tower, I'll lay it on the line,
The situation's fuckin' tense, we're running out of time.
My fuel low level light is on, this bird's about to quit,
So tell that goddam senator he doesn't count for shit!"

"Hammer 41, QSY to channel four;
You'll have to clear with Air Patch, I can't do any more."
"Roger, Cam Ranh Tower, I'm switching channels now,
I'm sure Air Patch will clear me to land this bird, somehow."

Air Patch, Air Patch, Air Patch, this is Hammer 41;
The tower made me check with you to see what could be done,
I know you'll understand my plight, I've confidence in you,
So clear me onto final, send the senator on through."

"Sorry 'bout that, 41, your story breaks our heart;
If this had happened yesterday we could have done our part;
You will divert to Tuy Hoa, consider this a must,
For Senator M_____ M_____ would dislike all this fuss."

"Roger, Roger, Air Patch, I get your message clear;
Situation understood; the VIP's too near;
We'll nurse this bird to Tuy Hoa, on this you can depend,
We'll keep this airplane flying, until the very end."

"Mayday! Mayday! Crown, this is Hammer 41;
Our fate is up to you boys, now, the home drome let us down;
We can't make it to Tuy Hoa, we'll have to punch out here,
So please alert the Jolly Greens, we hope that help is near!"

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

9. In-Flight Refueling

(Melody: Strawberry Roan)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

"Welcome, fighter pilots, both young and old,
And I'll tell you a story that'll make you turn cold,
A story of tankers, and a flight out to sea,
And I hate to tell you what they did to me."

Oh, we took off for Brown, oh, so early one morn,
 The weather was balmy, but not really warm;
 We soon left the coast line and headed to sea,
 And for the last time, land did I see.

Oh, we flew on for hours, it seemed like more,
 We flew and we flew till my butt it got sore,
 And we finally got to that spot far from land,
 Where there were supposed to be tankers at hand.

But yes, you have guessed it, no one was there,
 Nothing around but ocean and air;
 We called and we called, but it was in vain,
 There was nobody out there to refuel my plane.

Oh, we circled and circled, and hollered for gas;
 The pain was beginning to leave my poor ass,
 'Twas beginning to pucker and turn a dull hue,
 When finally a tanker came into view.

Well, bygones were bygones, and we didn't bitch,
 We just latched onto that son of a bitch;
 "Who ho," called the scanner, "it's under your wing,
 If you don't hook up, you likely will ding!"

So I tried it real slow, boys, but that didn't work;
 I tried again fast -- what a hell of a jerk,
 The funnel it hit me one hell of a blow,
 As I looked at the cold water down there below.

I looked at that water, so cold and so chilled,
 And I thought to myself, "I'll soon be killed,
 So I'd better hook up, and take on some fuel,
 'Cause that water below looks uncomfortably cool."

So I finally did it, I hit that damn hose,
 I hit that old funnel right square on the nose;
 The engineer said, "Sir, you're taking on fuel,"
 But the bastard was lying, the dirty old fool.

I called that damn scanner, said, "Turn on the gas,
 I can't wait much longer, or I'll bust my ass;"
 He looked up from his Playboy and said with a grin,
 "You know there are days, sir, when you just can't win."

That's the end of my story, I'm sorry to say,
 That old F-105 lies out in the bay;
 But I'll have my vengeance, you can bet your life,
 'Cause there's one tanker pilot that I'm going to knife!

10. I've Been Everywhere*
(Melody: I've Been Everywhere)

Armed Forces Radio Network Broadcast, Ubon, Thailand, August, 1968;
Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham. See song number 2

Well, I took off from Ubon in a thick and heavy driving rain,
I toted my bombs out to Green Anchor tanker plane,
I had a brand new AC riding in the front seat,
A guy with six months' RTU, before that, a tweek,
He asked me if my counters numbered much more than ten,
I said, "Listen Mac, there ain't no place up there I ain't been.

CHORUS: I've been everywhere, man, I've been everywhere,
I've crossed the mountains bare, man,
I've seen the flak-filled air,
Of SAM's I've had my share, man, I've been everywhere!
Ha-ummmmm....

Hanoi, Haiphong, Phuc Yen, Yen Bai,
Lang Son, Hoa Loc, Phu Tho, Son Tay,
Hoa Binh, Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, Bac Ninh,
Thai-Nguyen, Gia Lam, Viet Tri, Do Son,
Thud Ridge, MIG Ridge, Northeast railroad,
Bac Can, Cao Bang, Bac Giang, Phu Yang.

Sam Neua, Ban Ban, Quang Tri, Dong Ha,
Bat Lake, Dong Hoi, Quang Khe, Than Ma,
Red Route, Black Route, Blue Route, Purple Route,
Channel 97 and the Red and Black River Valley,
Landslide, boreslide, down the slide, tangleride,
In-town, crosstown, uptown, downtown.

11. MIG-21*

Armed Forces Radio Network Broadcast, Ubon, Thailand, August, 1968;
Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham (original source unknown),
Ubon, Thailand, April, 1969. See song number 2

Now a MIG-21 is a great airplane,
So the Phantom pilots say,
And I don't think we can doubt their word,
They go up there every day,
Long and sleek and fast and high --
It's a dang might fine machine,
You can take the word of an F4 jock -- a MIG-21 is mean.

But so is a Phantom -- ugly -- but big and powerful,
And faster than greased lightnin'.

There's a lot to be said for the guys who fly
 The MIG-21 up north,
 I don't reckon they make very much
 But every dime they're paid, they're worth.
 I mean, how much guts does it take
 To jump a force of twenty-four Thuds
 That's covered by a cap of F4D's and
 Eight MIG-hungry studs?

Yep, those MIG-drivers are pretty sharp,
 But not very smart --
 In fact, they gotta be outa their ever-lovin' minds
 To tangle with a Phantom.
 Now, take it from a guy who's been up North
 And had a MIG or two,
 That's a good way to end your tour right now,
 I'm here, and I'm tellin' you.

He's at 10 o'clock and goin' to 8
 And next at your deep 6,
 And your eyeballs are goin' like mad,
 Little man, you're in a fix.

But no sweat, GI -- that Phantom will reach up,
 Grab ahold of you, spin around, and swat that MIG
 Right between the eyes -- and bring you home a hero.

If you wanna know how to fight a MIG-21
 Here's what you can do,
 Talk to the guys that've been up there,
 They'll tell you a thing or two,
 Guys like Olds and Barrios,
 Bogoslofski and Kirk --
 They'll tell you that in a minute and a half
 You can do a whole day's work;
 They fly the Phantom -- or rather it flies them,
 It all depends on how you look at it.

I had my chance not long ago when the MIG's came out to play,
 And I was just one of eight good men that went up there one day,
 Throttles wide open and climb and dive and pirouettes and nips,
 Just take my word about MIG-21's, those dudes are mighty fine ships.

It was four Phantoms and four MIG's when we got started --
 When we got done it was just four Phantoms.

Yeah, a MIG-21 is a might fine ship,
 All the Phantom pilots say,
 And that little game is all for keeps
 When the MIG's come out to play.

We've been up there and we'll go up there
 Till this clambake is done,
 And there's been fights and there'll be fights
 Between the Phantom and the MIG-21 --

But just have a look at the score, friend --
 It's all in favor of the Phantom.

12. Number One Clismas Song
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Chestnuts roasting on a Thailand fire,
 Bullfrogs singing in the choir,
 Samlars singing "Ho, Ho, Ho,"
 It's Melly Clismas, you know.

Geicos clawing closs the cold bare floor,
 Flid lice cooking on the stove,
 Tee Lucks kissing neath the mistletoe,
 It's Melly Clismas, you know.

Sweet lips waiting for my tender kiss,
 Garlic breath gets in my way,
 VS's roasting in a napalm fire,
 Melly Clismas, Uncle Ho.

Cripples limping down a small side street,
 Napalm rising at their feet,
 I dropped it low but they went too slow,
 Melly Clismas, dear Ho.

VC making love near rice paddy,
 Tee Lucks' eyes are all aglow,
 Twenty mike-mikes up his ass,
 Tee Lucks screaming, "Go, go, go!"

Wolf Pack sends gettings from old Robin Olds,
 Chappie joined him over there,
 We'll carry on, the stars will be bright,
 Over Ubon Ratchathani tonight.

13. Oh, Little Town of Ho-Chi-Minh
 (Melody: Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem)
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Oh, little town of Ho-Chi-Minh,
 How safe you think you lie;
 Beneath your ring of SA-2's
 You think the 5's won't fly;
 Yet through the cloud deck raineth
 A deadly trail of bombs;
 Too late for fear, the end is near.
 How about that TLC???

14. Old Smokey
(Melody: On Top of Old Smokey)
35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Flying over old Cam Ranh
En route to the North,
My hands got so shaky
From the thoughts that came forth.

The sun was bright shining,
The sky it was clear,
But my heart it did falter,
I was frozen with fear.

As we crossed the border
I thought I would die,
But my fearless commander,
Oh, how well he did fly.

With this inspiration
What more could I do?
I screwed up my courage
And pressed on anew.

We started our bomb run,
The sights I did set,
We ripped our bombs off,
Then wiped off the sweat.

We turned toward the Tonkin
With the engines full bore;
She really was smokin'
Like a \$2 whore.

When once past the coast line,
With a sign of relief,
We'd gotten the job done
Just as it had been briefed.

This mission accomplished,
So important to me,
They're sure to award us
Our first DFC.

I'm an outstanding airman,
This story is true,
For I'm a co-pilot
On a B-52!

15. On Top of the Pop Up
 (Melody: On Top of Old Smokey)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

On top of the pop up
 And flat on my back,
 I lost my poor wingman
 In a big hail of flak.

Guard channel was silent,
 The sites were all dead,
 Until we rolled in
 And looked up ahead.

The sky filled with fireballs,
 The missiles flashed by,
 Sweet Mother of Jesus,
 We're all going to die!

Number 2 called out, "I'm hit,
 I'm going to bust;"
 Not one Goddamned ELINT
 A poor jack can trust.

So come, you young pilots,
 And listen to Dad,
 Forget about jinking,
 And your ass has been had.

They'll hit you and burn you,
 Their flak reaches far;
 It's a long walk to Takhli,
 And a beer at the bar.

16. One Hundred Missions
 (Melody: When Johnny Comes Marching Home)
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

One hundred missions we have flown, aha, aha,
 One hundred missions we have flown, aha, aha,
 One hundred missions we have flown,
 One hundred missions we have blown,
 But you can't return till Lyndon gives the word.

From one to one hundred we did count, aha, aha,
 From one to one hundred we did count, aha, aha,
 From one to one hundred we did count,
 But now one half or more don't count,
 And you can't return till Lyndon says the word.

They said they'd give us combat pay, aha, aha,
 They said they'd give us combat pay, aha, aha,
 They said they'd give us combat pay,
 And then the bastards took it away,
 But you can't return till Lyndon gives the word.

We're Iron Hands from old Takhli, aha, aha,
 We're Iron Hands from old Takhli, aha, aha,
 We're Iron Hands from old Takhli,
 Our hearts beat fast, we think we'll pee,
 But you can't return till Lyndon gives the word.

The Weasels fly around alone, aha, aha,
 The Weasels fly around alone, aha, aha,
 The Weasels fly around alone,
 With half a flight they head for home,
 But you can't return till Lyndon gives the word.

Not many will return alive, aha, aha,
 Not many will return alive, aha, aha,
 Not many will return alive,
 Who flew the bloody 105,
 But you can't return till Lyndon gives the word.

17. Our Leaders
 (Melody: Manana)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

At Phillips Range in Kansas
 The jocks all had the knack,
 But now that we're in combat
 We've got colonels on our back,
 And every time we say, "Shit-hot!"
 Or whistle in the bar,
 We have to answer to somebody
 Looking for a star.

CHORUS: Our leaders, our leaders,
 Our leaders, is what they always say,
 But it's bullshit, it's bullshit,
 It's bullshit they feed us every day!

Today we had a hot one
 And the jocks were scared as hell,
 They ran to meet us with a beer
 And tell us we were swell,
 But Recce took the BDA
 And said we missed a hair;
 Now we'll catch all kinds of hell
 From the wheels at Seventh Air.

They send us out in bunches
 To bomb a bridge and die,
 These tactics are for bombers
 That our leaders used to fly,
 The bastards don't trust our Colonel
 Up in Wing, and so I guess,
 We'll have to leave the thinking to
 The wheels in JCS!

The JCS are generals,
 But they're not always right,
 Sometimes they have to think it over
 Well into the night;
 When they have a question
 Or something they can't hack,
 They have to leave the judgment to
 That money-saving Mac!

Now Mac's job is in danger
 For he's on salary, too;
 To have the final say-so
 Is something he can't do;
 Before we fly a mission
 And everything's o.k.,
 Mac has to get permission from
 Flight leader L.B.J.!!

18. Pop Goes the Weasel
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Around and around the SAM site
 The missile chased the Weasel,
 The Weasel got pissed, the SAM got zapped,
 Pop goes the Weasel!

Willie Peter showed us where
 To roll in to displease 'em;
 One more pass with HEI,
 Pop goes the Weasel!

Ladyfingers did their job,
 Did more than just tease 'em,
 The Russian Techs got all pissed off,
 Pop goes the Weasel!

We look around for SAM sites,
 We grab their balls and squeeze 'em,
 They show their ass, we shoot it off,
 Pop goes the Weasel!

19. Republic's Ultra Hog
 (Melody: The Wabash Cannonball)
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Listen to the jingle, the gruntin' and the wheeze,
 As she rolls along the runway by the BAC-9 and the trees;
 Hear the mighty roarin' engine as you leap off in the fog,
 You're flying through the jungle in Republic's Ultra Hog.

We came up from old Korat one steamy summer day,
 As we pitched up on the target you could hear the gunners say,
 "She's big and fat and ugly, she's really quite a dog,
 She's known around the country as Republic's Ultra Hog."

Here's to M _____, his name will always smell,
 He'll always be remembered down in Fighter Pilot's Hell,
 He frags all the targets and send us out to die,
 He sends us into combat in Republic's 105.

Listen to the jingle, the gruntin' and the wheeze,
 As she rolls along the runway by the BAC-9 and the trees;
 Hear the mighty roarin' engine as you leap off in the fog,
 You're flying through the jungle in Republic's Ultra Hog.

20. Song of the Wolf Pack
 (Melody: Ghost Riders in the Sky)
 8th Tactical Fighter Wing Broadshets, Ubon, Thailand, May 1968-May 1969;
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Oh, pilots of the Wolf Pack,
 Go to the briefing room;
 The mission is a good one,
 To the MIG's it will mean doom;
 We're going up to Hanoi,
 To Kep and Phuc Yen, too,
 To write our bloody record
 In the annals of the blue.

We take off in our Phantoms
 To play our deadly cards,
 The engines make our thunder
 And our eyes are steely hard,
 We're on the way to battle
 The forces of the foe,
 We're certain to destroy them,
 We'll seek them high and low.

CHORUS: We battle today, and make our kills,
 The Wolf Pack in the sky.

We cycle through the tanker,
 The tension starts to rise,
 We go to meet our destiny
 Awaiting in the skies,
 We tune and arm our missiles
 As we streak across the black,
 Our boss is in the forefront
 Leading the Wolf Pack.

We're showing on their radar,
 Their hearts are full of hate,
 They rise to meet the challenge,
 To meet their bloody fate;
 They're headed for disaster,
 As any fool can tell,
 If they dare to face the Wolf Pack,
 We'll shoot them clear to hell.

Chorus

Wolf Pack Lead says, "Contact,"
 They're MIG's, a flight of two,
 I'm too close for the Sparrow,
 The Sidewinder will do,
 I'll roll into the 6 o'clock
 Behind the trailing MIG,
 And let him have a missile
 Just like a fiery gig.

Oh, other flights engaged more MIG's,
 Hot action filled the air,
 The Wolf Pack's lust was sated
 Before heading for their lair;
 The enemy won't soon forget
 The awesome deadly toll,
 As the 8th Wing troops return to base
 And make their victory rolls.

Chorus

21. The Ballad of Blue Four*

Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham (original source unknown),
 Ubon, Thailand, April 1969. See song number 2

There's a fireball down there on the hillside,
 And I think maybe we've lost a friend,
 But we'll keep on flyin', and we'll keep on dyin',
 For duty and honor never end.

There's an upended glass on the table,
 Down in front of a lone empty chair,
 Yesterday we were with him, today God be with him,
 Wherever he is in Your care.

They were four when they took off this mornin',
 And their duty was there in the sky,
 Only three ships returnin', Blue Four ain't returnin',
 To Blue Four then hold your glasses high!

There's a fireball down there on the hillside,
 And I think maybe we've lost a friend,
 But we'll keep on flyin', and we'll keep on dyin',
 For duty and honor never end.

22. The Ballad of Machete Two*
 (Melody: The Wabash Cannonball)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

"Hello, Ubon Tower, this here's Machete Two,
 It's rainin' on the runway, Oh Lord, what will I do?
 My gas tank's gettin' empty, and I am puckered tight,
 Tell me, Ubon Tower, why must we fly at night?"

"Hello there, Machete, do you see the runway's end?
 'Cause if you don't then go around and we'll try once again;"
 "Machete Two is on the go, I need some JP-4,
 Just let me hit the tanker, and then we'll try once more."

"Lion, I need vectors out to Green Anchor Plane,
 Please expedite the joinup, I'm flyin' in the rain,
 I've got to hit the tanker, 'cause I sure need some gas,
 If he ain't got no JP-4, then he can kiss my ass."

"Hello there, Machete, Lion here, you're three miles out,
 I'll have you on Blue Anchor soon, of that there is no doubt,
 OOPS, disregard the last word, you're fifty miles in trail;
 If you will just be patient, this time I will not fail."

"Hello Lion, Machete, you can't mean fifty miles,
 I'm reading seven hundred pounds here on my gas tank dials,
 I'm headin' back to Ubon, I'll try it one more time,
 The truth about my chances is that they ain't worth a dime."

My throttles back at idle, descending at max glide,
 If we don't make it this time, we'll have to let it slide,
 We've got it on the runway, pulled off and turned about,
 Good Lord, look at those gauges, both engines just flamed out!

"Hello, Ubon Tower, this here's Machete Two,
 I'm standing by my airplane, in mud up to my knees,
 I don't know just what happened, I'd like to tell you how,
 Won't you send the crew truck, I'd like to come in now."

"Hello there, Machete, this here is Ubon Tower,
Just make a left three-sixty, you'll be down within the hour,
We've got some TAC departures lined up on the other end,
Just let me get 'em airborne, and you can come on in."

"Ubon Tower, Machete, you just don't understand,
We are no longer flying, we're settin' in the sand,
Our airplane is inverted and lyin' on its back,
So come and take us home, I'm tired and wanna hit the sack."

"Machete, Ubon Tower, you say you're on the ground?
You know without a clearance that you can't set her down,
If you have violated regs you know you'll have to wait;
Machete, do you hear me?" "I hear you -- FSH!"

The moral of my story is that if you're low on gas,
Just get it on the runway, and only make one pass;
On unprepared dirt runways -- now listen carefully --
You know it is illegal to land the F4D!

23. The Ho-Chi-Minh Trail

(Melody: Along the Navajo Trail)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)

Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Every day along about sunrise,
When the sky line's beginning to pale,
I load six seven-fifties,
And fly the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail.

I hate to see the flak a-burstin' 'round me,
I shiver when I think about its sting,
But over yonder hill the SAM's are rising,
They always seem to yank my pucker string.

Well, what do you know, it's Bingo already,
And two hundred's the course that I sail;
Tomorrow I'll load more seven-fifties
And fly the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail.

24. The Red River Valley

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)

Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

To the valley he said he was flying,
And he never saw the pay that he earned;
Many jocks have flown into the valley,
And a number have never returned.

So I listened as he briefed the mission,
 "Tonight at the bar Teak Flight will sing,
 But we're goin' to the Red River Valley,
 And today you are flyin' my wing.

"Oh, the flak is so thick in the valley,
 That the MIG's and the SAM's we don't need;
 So fly high and down-sun in the valley,
 And guard well the ass of Teak Lead.

"Now if things turn to shit in the valley,
 And the briefing I gave, you don't heed,
 They'll be waiting at the Hanoi Hilton,
 And it's fish-heads and rice for Teak Lead!"

We refueled on the way to the valley,
 In the States it had always been fun,
 But with thunder and lightnin' all 'round us,
 'Twas the last AAR for Teak One.

Oh, he flew through the flak toward the target,
 With his bombs and his rockets, drew a bead,
 But he never pulled out of his bomb run,
 'Twas fatal for another Teak Lead.

So come and sit by my side at the briefing,
 We will sit there and scratch our poor heads,
 For we're going to the Red River Valley,
 And my callsign today is Teak Lead!

25. The Thud*

Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham (original source unknown),
 Ubon, Thailand, April, 1969. See song number 2

I'm a Thud pilot, I love my plane;
 It is my body, I am its brain;
 My Thunderchief loves me, and I love her, too,
 But I get the creeps
 With only one seat
 And one engine, too.

She's faster than lightnin', it says on her dials;
 To get a Thud airborne, takes only two miles;
 She's packed with transistors, black boxes, diodes,
 But stay alert
 'Cuz you might get hurt
 When she EXPLODES.

She totes more bombs than a B-17;
 My F-105 has a gun and she's mean;
 But there is one thing that curdles my blood,
 It's lonesome up there
 Alone in the air
 In my single-seat Thud.

I love my Thud and she loves me, too,
 But she soaks up flak like a magnet can do;
 If I get my hundred and I'm still alive,
 I'll have no grief,
 Goodboy, Thunderchief,
 My F-105.

26. The Thud Driver's Theme
 (Melody: The Whiffenpoof Song)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

From a hootch in Southeast Asia,
 To the place where aces dwell,
 To the strip club down at 'Zuke
 We knew so well,
 Sing the fighter jocks assembled
 With their glasses raised on high,
 Sing they poorly, not too clearly,
 Loud as well;

We will throw our glasses wildly
 And threw our bombs as well,
 And the finks at Two AD can go to hell!

We are poor fighter jocks who have lost our way,
 Help -- Help -- Help
 We flew to the town of Hanoi today,
 HELP -- HELP -- HELP
 Steely-eyed pilots up in the blue,
 Lead got zapped by an SA-2,
 Let's haul ass of they'll zap us, too,
 A _____ B _____ now!!!

27. The Yellow Rose of Hanoi
 (Melody: Yellow Rose of Texas)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

There's a yellow rose in Hanoi
 Who loves a fighter crew,
 She runs the Hanoi Hilton
 And she longs to welcome you!
 Her father's name is Ho-Chi-Minh,
 He has a long goatee,
 And if you greet him nicely
 He will let you stay for free.

CHORUS: Her eyes are shaped like almonds,
 And I'll give you a hunch,
 I don't want to meet her family,
 'Cause they're a nasty bunch.
 It's fish-heads and rice for breakfast,
 And fish-heads and rice for tea,
 But so long as they don't catch me,
 No fish-heads and rice for me!

Oh, you may fly a Phantom,
 Or you may fly a Thud,
 But if you fly to Hanoi
 Better listen to me, bud,
 You may talk of girls in Bangkok,
 Or Los Angeles and such,
 But the yellow rose of Hanoi
 Is just a bit too much!

28. Twelve Days of Tet

(Melody: Twelve Days of Christmas)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

On the first day of Tet
 My DO gave to me,
 A gun on my Phantom F4-C.

Second -- 2 CBU's
 Third -- 3 Rocket Launchers
 Fourth -- 4 High drags
 Fifth -- 5 hand grenades
 Sixth -- 6 Sidewinders
 Seventh -- 7 750's
 Eighth -- 8 Charging Sparrows
 Ninth -- 9 nasty napes
 Tenth -- 10 tons of bombs
 Eleventh -- 11 Ladyfingers
 Twelfth -- 12 Firecrackers

29. Wand'rin' Man

(Words and music written in December 1968 by Major J. F. Tusso)

When I am weary and can't get no rest,
 I long for my baby, the one I love best,
 She knows what I'm missin', she knows what I lack,
 She knows I'm a wand'rin' man, but I always come back.

It's been such a long time since I've seen her smile,
 The sights are the same now, I hate every mile
 Will I ever find her? Will she wait for me?
 Can she love a wand'rin' man that fights to be free?

The days are too long, that old sun doesn't shine,
 How is my baby, is she doin' fine?
 I'm so lost without her, I must find her soon,
 There highways and byways will lead me to ruin.

There is no moon out, the stars are all dim,
 Where is my baby, does she dream of him?
 Does she think I'm lost now, does she think we're through?
 Does she need somebody else so she won't feel blue?

It's been such a long time since I've seen her smile,
 The sights are the same now, I hate every mile,
 Will I ever find her? Will she wait for me?
 Can she love a wand'rin' man that fights to be free?

30. Where Have All the Old Heads Gone?
 (Melody: Where Have All the Flowers Gone?)
 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
 Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Where have all the soldiers gone?
 Long time passing,
 Where have all the soldiers gone?
 Long time ago,
 Where have all the soldiers gone?
 They've all gone to Vietnam;
 When will they ever learn?
 Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the Vietnamese gone?
 Long time passing,
 Where have all the Vietnamese gone?
 Long time ago,
 Where have all the Vietnamese gone?
 They've all become Viet Cong;
 Oh, when will we ever learn?
 Oh, when will we ever learn?

Where have all the VC's gone?
 Long time passing,
 Where have all the VC's gone?
 Long time ago,
 Where have all the VC's gone?
 To fix the bridges that we bomb;
 Oh, when will they ever learn?
 Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where do all the Weasels go?
Long time passing,
Where do all the Weasels go?
Long time ago,
Where do all the Weasels go?
O'er the ridge to meet the foe;
Oh, when will they ever learn?
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the SAM sites gone?
Long time passing,
Where have all the SAM sites gone?
Long time ago,
Where have all the SAM sites gone?
They've been down, oh, so long;
Oh, when will they ever learn?
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where do all the strike flights go?
Long time passing,
Where do all the strike flights go?
Long time ago,
Where do all the strike flights go?
Cross the fence again, I know;
Oh, when will they ever learn?
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the flak sites gone?
Long time passing,
Where have all the flak sites gone?
Long time ago,
Where have all the flak sites gone?
Along the railroad, oh, so long;
Oh, when will they ever learn?
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the old heads gone?
Long time passing,
Where have all the old heads gone?
Long time ago,
Where have all the old heads gone?
They've gone home; their tour is done;
You see, they've finally learned;
Oh yes, they've finally learned!

31. Wild Weasel(Melody: Sweet Betsy from Pike)35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

Wild Weasel, Wild Weasel, they call me by name,
I fly up on Thud Ridge and play the big game,
I fly o'er valleys and hid behind hills,
I dodge all the missiles then go in for kills,
I'm a lonely Thud driver with a shit-hot fine bear!

Come weak guns, some weak guns, they're all off at once,
But don't worry fellows, for threats there are none,
There's a big one just looking at 2 o'clock now,
There's flak all around us, they're shooting, and how!
I'm a lonely Thud driver with a shit-hot fine bear!

Keep moving, they're shooting, the target's at eight,
Go burner, now rill in, don't pull it off straight,
A missile! A missile! Let's take it on down,
Oh God, where's that bastard? My flight suit's turned brown,
I'm a lonely Thud driver with a shit-hot fine bear!

Now pull it up, pull up, and head for the sky,
The missile's at two, boys, now watch it sail by,
There's smoke from the SAM site out there in the grass,
Set 'em up hot, boys, and we'll nail his ass,
I'm a lonely Thud driver with a shit-hot fine bear!

Wild Weasel, Wild Weasel, they call me by name,
I flew o'er the fence and I've won the big game,
One hundred, one hundred, I'm heading for home,
And o'er those damn hills I'll never more roam,
I'm a lonely Thud driver with a shit-hot fine bear!

32. Will the MIG's Come Out to Play?(Melody: My Indiana Home)35th Tactical Fighter Wing Songbook (uncopyrighted)
Phan Rang Air Force Base, South Vietnam, 1969

When the SAM's start rising from old Haiphong Harbor,
And the 85's start puffing at Kep Hay,
You will know your target's just around that mountain,
And you'll wonder if the MIG's will come to play.

Oh, you reach your pull-up point and start your pop up,
And the tracers seem to urge you on your way,
You see the bridge and as you start your roll-in,
And you'll wonder if the MIG's will come to play.

Oh, you've dropped your bombs and now you're off and running,
 Jinking hard you're on your merry way,
 And as you reach the jagged limestone ridges,
 You'll wonder if the MIG's will come to play.

Oh, you've reached the coast and all the sea is friendly,
 Your fuel is low, but "Not too low," you say,
 I can make it back to Korat nice and easy,
 If only the MIG's don't come out to play!

Oh, you start your climb and now you're resting easy,
 A drink of water helps you on your way,
 But a glint of light, a speck up high, and you know
 The MIG's have fin-al-ly come out to play!

Oh, your burner's lit, you're diving down, you're running,
 But his overtake is just too great today;
 In your dinghy bobbing on the Gulf of Tonkin,
 You wish those MIG's had not come out to play!

33. Yankee Air Pirate*

Armed Forces Radio Network Broadcast, Ubon, Thailand, August, 1968;
 Tape from Major Henry C. (Hank) Fordham (original source unknown),
 Ubon, Thailand, April 1969. See song number 2

I am a Yankee Air Pirate,
 With the d.t.'s and bloodshot eyeballs;
 My nerves are all rundown from bombing downtown,
 From SAM breaks and bad bandit calls.

CHORUS: A Yankee Air Pirate, a Yankee Air Pirate,
 A Yankee Air Pirate am I;
 A Yankee Air Pirate, a Yankee Air Pirate,
 If I don't get my hundred I'll die.

I've carried iron bombs on both outboards,
 Flown high cap for F-1-0 Thuds;
 I've snivelled a counter or two once or twice,
 And sweated my own rich red blood.

I've been downtown to both bridges,
 To Thai-Nguyen, Kep, and Phuc Yen,
 And if you ask me then I'm sure you can see
 There's no place up there I ain't been.

GLOSSARY

AAR -- air-to-air refueling, generally from a KC-135 jet tanker to F-4's, F-105's, or other aircraft with an air-to-air refueling capability.

AB -- afterburner, which provides additional thrust to a jet engine; usually used sparingly because it consumes great amounts of fuel.

AC -- aircraft commander, the pilot in charge of an aircraft.

ace -- means "good;" also refers to a pilot who has shot down at least five enemy aircraft.

AD -- air division; it consists of several wings of aircraft, usually operating out of different bases.

air patch -- air-to-ground radio relay system for voice communication.

anchor -- an air refueling control point or area where tanker and receiver aircraft rendezvous.

B-17 -- World War II four-engine bomber; reciprocating engines.

B-52 -- currently operational eight-engine heavy jet bomber.

Bac Can -- airfield 65 nautical miles (nm.) north of Hanoi.

Bac Giang -- city 25 nm. north of Hanoi on the Northeast Railroad to China.

BAC 9 -- an arresting cable for stopping aircraft on a runway in emergencies.

Bac Ninh -- city 15 nm. northeast of Hanoi on the Northeast Railroad to China.

Banana Valley -- pilot-coined name for a geographical spot.

Ban Ban -- city and airfield in Laos 115 nm. northeast of Vientiane near the eastern end of the Plain of Jarres; Ban Ban was noted for its heavy defensive flak.

bandit call -- radio call warning of the approach or proximity of enemy aircraft (bandits); "bad bandit call," a false alarm.

Barracuda -- an aircraft carrying electronic warfare detection devices to warn other aircraft of hostile missile launches.

Bat Lake -- descriptive name for a lake in North Vietnam 12 nm. north of the DMZ and 8 nm. from the coast of the Gulf of Tonkin.

BDA -- bomb damage assessment; probable or actual results of a bombing mission ascertained from photos or other evidence.

bear -- affectionate term for an aircraft; also "beast."

beep -- sound made by a downed aircrew member's emergency radio by which rescue aircraft fix his position.

- Bingo -- means an aircraft has minimum fuel.
- bird -- an aircraft; not as affectionate a term as "bear" or "beast."
- black boxes -- computers, radar equipment, or other electronic gear.
- Black River -- a strategically important river running parallel and south of the Red River from the northwest to southeast across North Vietnam.
- Black Route -- a reconnaissance route between the North Vietnamese 17th and 18th parallels.
- BLC -- boundary layer control; air from the engine compressor of the F4 directed over the wings which increases lift at slow speeds; the BLC light comes on to indicate that the air is becoming too hot for continued safe flight.
- Blue Route -- similar to Black Route.
- boreslide -- a play on the word "boresight;" an aircraft with its weapon release system in boresight has optimum synchronization between its radar, optical sight, and computers; also "bore" meaning to fly, or in this case "to fly down a slide," to dive.
- bridges, both bridges -- two large bridges near Hanoi.
- Brown, or Brown Anchor -- air refueling area in the Gulf of Tonkin.
- bullseye -- nickname for Hanoi.
- bust, or bust your ass -- to collide, crash, to "ding."
- callsign -- radio name for an aircraft or flight of aircraft.
- Cam Rahn, Cam Ranh Bay -- large U.S. airfield in South Vietnam about 165 nm. northeast of Saigon on the coast.
- Cao Bang -- airfield 100 nm. north-northeast of Hanoi, 10 nm. from the Chinese border.
- cap, high cap, MIG cap -- fighter aircraft "capping" or flying cover to protect fighter-bombers or other aircraft from hostile planes.
- CBU -- cluster bomb unit; has the same effect as dropping many hand grenades.
- Channel 97 -- radio navigation aid for friendly aircraft.
- Chappie -- Col. (now Brig. Gen.) Daniel "Chappie" James, former vice-commander of Ubon's 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, the "Wolf Pack."
- combat pay -- \$65.00 monthly paid to fliers above their regular pay for flying combat missions.

counter -- a mission in North Vietnam that before the bombing halt of November 1968 "counted" toward the 100 required for a ticket back to the States.

credit -- for a "counter;" you don't get credit toward your 100 for a "freebie," a combat mission flown elsewhere than over North Vietnam.

Crown -- the agency controlling a search-and-rescue effort to recover a downed American flyer.

cycle -- for a flight of aircraft to refuel in turn and in formation from a tanker.

DFC -- the Distinguished Flying Cross, awarded for bravery or extraordinary achievement while a flyer is engaged in military flying.

ding -- to collide, to crash, to "bust your ass."

divert -- to change from your originally planned landing destination to another airfield.

DO -- deputy commander for operations of a fighter wing; he directly supervises air operations for the wing commander.

Dong Ha -- airfield in South Vietnam 10 nm. south of the DMZ near the coast.

Dong Hoi -- city and airfield in North Vietnam 30 nm. north of the DMZ on the coast.

Do Son -- airfield 10 nm. southeast of Haiphong on the Gulf of Tonkin.

down, to be down -- out of commission, not heard from; e.g. "The MIG's were down during the strike;" antonym, "up."

down the slide -- to dive to release bombs or other ordinance.

downtown -- nickname for Hanoi taken from the song of the same name, made popular by Petula Clark during the War; also "intown," "up-down," "crosstown."

D.R.V. -- Democratic Republic of Vietnam, or Communist North Vietnam.

EGT -- exhaust gas temperature of a jet engine.

85's -- 85 millimeter anti-aircraft artillery, also called "triple A."

ELINT -- airborne electronically gathered intelligence data, or aircraft which perform that function.

engineer -- a flight engineer, an enlisted man aboard an aircraft whose duty is to monitor and maintain aircraft engine operation and otherwise aid the pilot.

fence, to cross the fence -- to fly across the Mekong River into or out of the combat zone.

- 51 -- Channel 51, the radio navigation aid located at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand.
- final -- proper aircraft heading, descent rate, airspeed, and altitude during runway approach prior to landing.
- Fives -- F-105's.
- Flight -- 2, 4 or more aircraft flying in formation under the command of a flight leader in number one aircraft.
- Flight leader, or lead -- commander of a flight of aircraft.
- foxtrot -- the letter "F" in the Air Force phonetic alphabet.
- frag -- noun and verb; scheduled target and tactics for a specific air combat mission.
- frappin' -- euphemism for "fuckin'."
- FSH -- fighter pilot war cry, often uttered in exasperation; may mean "Fight! Shit! Hate!" which were supposed to be -- for some -- the only essential functions of the genuine fighter pilot.
- funnel -- the end of the air-to-air refueling boom is usually funnel-shaped for better aerodynamic stability.
- G -- a unit of measurement which equals one times the force of gravity.
- geico -- a prolific Southeast Asian lizard usually three to five inches long; it is found on the walls and ceilings of even the best hotels, and is said to make an obscene sound.
- Gia Lam -- an airfield just north of Hanoi.
- GIB -- acronym for "Guy in Back;" the pilot or navigator who flies in the back seat of the F-4 Phantom, or more generally, any tandem, two-seat aircraft.
- Green Anchor -- an air refueling area.
- guard channel -- a radio channel used primarily for emergency calls.
- gun -- an aerial cannon used for air-to-air combat or strafing.
- hack -- "to hack," to perform effectively.
- Hammer 41 -- an aircraft radio callsign arbitrarily assigned for an individual mission, e.g. Falcon 3, Blivit 2.
- Hanoi Hilton -- a famous, or perhaps infamous, POW camp in North Vietnam.
- haul ass -- to leave quickly.
- HEI -- high explosive incendiary.

high drags -- bombs with special fins or other devices to increase the time of fall.

Ho, Uncle Ho -- Ho Chi Minh, former North Vietnamese leader, now deceased.

Hoa Binh -- an airfield 30 nm. southwest of Hanoi.

Hoa Loc -- an airfield 20 nm. west of Hanoi.

home drome -- the base where a given aircraft is permanently stationed.

hootch -- a hut or building; fighter pilots both live in and attack hootches.

houseboy -- usually on an 8-to-5 shift, he makes the pilot's bed, shines his shoes, dusts the room, and empties trash.

Huey -- an HUE; a small, easily maneuverable helicopter.

hundred -- 100 missions over North Vietnam equaled a complete combat tour for a fighter pilot -- after the bombing halt of November 1968 the usual tour was one year.

Iron bombs -- conventional bombs, contrasted with napalm, CBU's, high drags, or other specialized ordinance.

Iron Hands -- F-105 aircraft specially equipped to detect and hit hostile SAM sites.

JCS -- U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest ranking officers in the U.S. Armed Forces; at the Pentagon they advise the Secretary of Defense and the President, as well as oversee their respective services.

jinking -- erratic evasive maneuvering of a fighter aircraft after weapon release; makes it difficult for enemy gunners to track and hit the aircraft.

jock -- from "jockey," a pilot; possibly also from "jockstraps," since those who wear them are usually quite athletic, and therefore manly and rugged.

joinup -- airborne maneuver whereby two aircraft join to fly in formation, or for air-to-air refueling.

JP-4 -- aircraft jet fuel.

Kep -- airfield 30 nm. northeast of Hanoi on the Northeast Railroad to China.

Korat -- a U.S. airbase in Northern Thailand, the home of F-4's, F-105's, and other aircraft.

ladyfingers -- 500 pound iron bombs.

Lang Son -- an airfield 60 nm. north of Haiphong, about 8 nm. from the Chinese border on the Northeast Railroad out of Hanoi.

launch light -- indicates the launch of enemy missiles against an aircraft; warns the pilot to maneuver and pray, together, or in that order.

Lead -- leader, or flight leader; the number one, or command aircraft in a formation.

Lion -- agency at Ubon that monitors and controls aircraft arrivals and departures by radar and radio communication; also aids or arranges emergency air-to-air refueling.

Luey, or Looie -- slang for "lieutenant."

Mac -- Robert S. McNamara, former Secretary of Defense under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Mark 82 -- a 500 pound iron bomb.

Mayday -- traditional radio distress call; means "emergency."

MIG -- a Russian-built series of jet fighters.

MIG Ridge -- near Hanoi, the site of many downed enemy aircraft.

mike-mike -- millimeter; e.g., 20 mike-mike refers to 20 millimeter guns.

Nam Dinh -- an airfield 38 nm. southwest of Haiphong.

nape, or napes -- napalm.

97 -- Channel 97, a radio navigational aid in friendly territory.

Northeast Railroad -- runs for 85 nm. from Hanoi to the Chinese border; up the road from the border for another 100 nm. is the Chinese town of Nan-Ning.

number one -- the best in a shifting scale of quality from 1-10; a number 10 pilot would be the worst possible.

o'clock -- relative clock position of another aircraft to yours; one dead ahead would be at twelve o'clock, and so on.

old heads -- experienced fliers, in contrast with FNG's ("fuckin' new guys").

Olds, Robin -- former commander of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, Ubon, Thailand, and foremost ace of the war.

one hundred, one hundred missions -- see "hundred."

outboards -- the racks furthest out on the aircraft's wings; could carry ordinance or auxiliary fuel tanks.

Package Six -- for air combat purposes, North Vietnam was divided into six operational areas called Packages One through Six. Package Six was the Hanoi area, an extremely dangerous Package.

pass -- to dive, or to lunge at a hostile aircraft.

PC-1 -- aircraft primary hydraulic control system.

Phantom II -- the McDonnell F-4 two-engine jet fighter; the workhouse of the tactical air war over Vietnam.

Phuc Yen -- an airfield 15 nm. northwest of Hanoi.

PIO -- Public Information Officer, a military man who works between the media and the military; a military news reporter or editor.

pissed, to get -- to become exceedingly angry.

pop up -- to climb rapidly.

punch out -- to eject from an aircraft.

Purple Route -- similar to Black Route.

QSY -- command to change radio channels.

Quang Khe -- a city in North Vietnam 40 nm. north of the DMZ on the coast of the Gulf of Tonkin.

Quang Tri -- a city and airfield in South Vietnam 25 nm. northwest of Hue near the coast, and 15 nm. south of the DMZ.

radar -- used in a fighter to detect other aircraft and in conjunction with ordnance release when practicable.

recce -- air reconnaissance.

Red, Red River, Red River Valley -- a strategically important North-Vietnamese river and valley running from the northwest to southeast across North Vietnam and through Hanoi.

Red Route -- similar to Black Route.

regs -- regulations

ripple -- to drop off bombs in an almost random pattern.

Robin, Robin Olds -- see "Olds."

roger -- Air Force jargon meaning "Yes, I understand and will comply."

round -- a single bullet, artillery shell, or ground-to-ground rocket.

RTB -- return to base.

RTU -- a replacement training unit; a stateside unit which trains aircrew members for Southeast Asia or other operational flying bases throughout the world.

Russian techs -- Russian technical advisers to forces of communist bloc nations, or in this case, North Vietnam.

sack -- bed; "to stay in the sack."

- SAM -- a surface-to-air missile directed at opposing aircraft.
- SAM break -- evasive action taken to cause a SAM to miss an aircraft.
- samlar -- a Thai bicycle cab which holds two people uncomfortably; it is three-wheeled, and the driver (or samlar) pedals in front.
- Sam Neua -- a city in northeast Laos about 100 miles southwest of Hanoi and 20 miles from the North Vietnamese border.
- Sandy -- an Al-E, propeller-driven aircraft most frequently used to suppress enemy ground fire during a rescue operation of a downed American flier.
- SA-2 -- a Russian-made surface-to-air missile.
- scanner -- the boom operator who rides on his belly in the tail of a tanker aircraft; he faces aft and "scans" or looks through a large window.
- 750 -- a 750 pound bomb.
- Seventh Air Force -- headquartered at Tan Son Nhut Air Base near Saigon, it directs all air operations in Southeast Asia.
- shit-hot -- as an adjective, it qualifies something as being the very best; as an expletive, it connotes great pleasure or joy on the speaker's part.
- Sidewinder -- an air-to-air missile which is especially effective close-in because of its heat-seeking capability; a favored weapon against MIG's by such aces as Robin Olds.
- Silver Dawn West, or East -- air combat operation areas to the extreme west and east in Vietnam; these identifiers were used very early in the air war and were dropped probably in mid-1967.
- site -- a SAM site or location.
- snivel -- to work one's way into North Vietnam when not originally scheduled to fly there; a fast-talking pilot would often try to talk controlling agencies into letting him use extra ordinance in North Vietnam when it was not needed elsewhere; thus he could convert a mission which didn't count toward ending his tour to one which would (cf. "hundred").
- Son Tay -- a town 20 nm. west-northwest of Hanoi; the site of the attempt to rescue American POW's on 20 November 1970.
- Sparrow -- a radar guided air-to-air missile.
- TAC departures -- tactical aircraft departing or about to depart on a combat mission.
- Takhli -- a U.S. airbase in Thailand.
- Tee Lucks -- mistress or girl friend; English corruption of a Thai word.
- Tet -- Southeast Asian holiday season of the lunar new year in late January.

Thai Binh -- city 20 nm. southwest of Haiphong.

Thai-Nguyen -- airfield 35 nm. north of Hanoi.

three-sixty -- a 360 degree compass turn which delays time and puts an aircraft back on its initial heading.

Thud -- pilot's affectionate name for the F-105 Republic Thunderchief, a jet fighter-bomber.

Thud Ridge -- west of Hanoi, a ridge where many Thuds crashed.

Thunderchief -- see "Thud."

Tiger Hound -- a combat air operation area in Laos.

TLC -- tender lovin' care.

TOC -- tactical operations center of a fighter wing.

Tonkin -- the Gulf west of Vietnam north of the DMZ.

tour -- a tour of duty in Vietnam for an American flier; prior to November 1968 it was 100 missions over North Vietnam; after that date it was normally a year long.

trail -- one behind the other in a straight line; e.g. bombs in trail, aircraft in trail.

Trash Haulers -- C-130 cargo aircraft and their crews; the importance of what they carried was frequently questioned by fun-loving fighter pilots.

triple-A -- anti-aircraft artillery.

Tuy Hoa -- American airbase in South Vietnam.

tweat, or tweet -- a T-33 jet trainer whose pilots are frequently the object of jokes by fighter pilots.

Two AD -- Second Air Division.

Ubon Ratchathani, or simply Ubon -- an American airbase in southwest Thailand -- home of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing.

up, SAM's or MIG's are -- operationally active, a threat to American aircraft.

VC -- Vietcong, military supporters of the National Liberation Front, South Vietnamese militant communists.

Viet Tri -- a hamlet 25 nm. northeast of Hanoi with a strategically important railroad bridge across the Red River.

VIP -- a very important person.

Vulcan -- a highspeed, Gatling-type airborne cannon.

Weasel, or Wild Weasel -- confer "Iron Hand."

Wing -- consists of several squadrons of approximately 25 aircraft each plus the men and equipment to support them; the Air Force's minimum size unit capable of completely independent operation.

Willie Pete, or Willy Pete -- white phosphorus ordinance used primarily by spotter planes to mark targets for fighter aircraft.

Wolf Pack -- nickname of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing based at Ubon Airfield, Thailand; under the leadership of then-Colonel Robin Olds, this wing shot down more MIG's over North Vietnam than any other.

Yankee Air Pirate -- North Vietnamese English nickname for American fliers, taken from news releases to the world press; used derogatorily by the North Vietnamese, the label was later worn with pride by American fighter pilots.

Yen Bai -- an airfield 65 nm. northwest of Hanoi.

Zapped -- to get hit by enemy antiaircraft, missile, or ground fire.

'Zuke -- Itazuke AFB, Japan.